

LETTERS *to the Editor*

OUR MEMBERS WILL undoubtedly appreciate your factual summary of the resolutions passed by the House of Delegates of the California Medical Association since 1962 as revealed in the editorial entitled, "Where We Stand on the Question of Therapeutic Abortion," in the April 1967 issue of CALIFORNIA MEDICINE. As you know, the resolutions recommend increased relaxation of the law pertaining to legalized abortions. You obviously are quite enthusiastic about modifying the present law and accordingly make some very biased and exaggerated comments on this very controversial issue.

In your editorial, you abandon objectivity, or refuse to recognize reality when you state, "Yet, paradoxically, today's physicians still find themselves bound to outdated abortion legislation which perpetuates needless suffering and fosters poor medical practices." This fantastically ridiculous claim warrants critical analysis and comment, far beyond the intent of this letter. If the obstetricians and gynecologists on your editorial board, however, agree with this exaggerated statement, I hope that you would permit a guest editorial or a series of articles presenting both sides of this question, in order to place this problem in proper perspective.

Furthermore, I notice you frequently refer to the "products of conception." You are perhaps, consciously or unconsciously, trying to avoid thinking of the fetus as an embryonic living human being. There is very scientific reason for the latter concept. Nowhere in your article do you suggest that this "product of conception" is the beginning of a new life, different from any other human being living or dead. You unashamedly justify the murder of this human being on the basis of a "substantial risk to the physical and mental health" of the mother, vague as are all these terms.

Dr. Herbert Ratner states in an article scheduled for publication in the *Illinois Medical Journal*, May 1967 issue, "After taking up the cudgel

against the battered child syndrome, are we now going to pick up the curette and replace the extra-uterine with the intra-uterine battered child syndrome?" The inconsistency of our attitude or the hypocritical nature of it, must be apparent to many laymen. We probably have not made a profound enough study into the serious implications of the resolutions passed by the House of Delegates since 1962. Thus, we are in a very vulnerable position from the public relations standpoint, not to mention the disservice that we are guilty of, in our innocent acceptance of the pro-abortionists' propaganda. The official position of the California Medical Association on this problem has shocked many members of our organization to the realization that there is a serious communication gap between us and the business of our Delegates and Officers. Thus, many of us have already signed a petition protesting the official California Medical Association viewpoint. It is hoped that an appropriate remedial policy will be established in the future to inform our membership of the various resolutions being considered by the California Medical Association in advance of the annual meetings of the House of Delegates so that our membership may more effectively voice their opinions.

It would appear appropriate, again, to quote Dr. Herbert Ratner, a Public Health Officer, who rightfully states "... let us not forget that the liberty to abort makes the physician more like a god than is good for him." Again, in quoting Dr. Joseph DeLee, an eminent obstetrician whom we all admire, he writes: "At the present time, when rivers of blood and tears of innocent men, women, and children are flowing in most parts of the world, it seems silly to be contending over the right to live of an unknowable atom of human flesh in the uterus of a woman. No it is not silly. On the contrary, it is of transcendent importance that there be in this chaotic world one high spot, however small, which is against the deluge of immorality that is sweeping over us. That we the medical pro-

fession hold to the principle of the sacredness of human life and of the right of the individual even though unborn is proof that humanity is not yet lost . . .”

In the Beilensen Abortion Law, we are dealing with very basic concepts of life and the extermination of life, rather than life and the preservation of life. The latter has been the guiding philosophy of the medical profession since the time of Hippoc-

rates. The present peculiar trend to reverse our traditional philosophy is not, I pray, the consensus of our membership. You must open the pages of CALIFORNIA MEDICINE to an appropriate literary debate and a discussion of these very very basic issues. In the future, also, the House of Delegates must reconsider their position on these resolutions that they passed since 1962.

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